

Land Use and Westward Expansion

Purpose

Students will identify the agricultural regions of the United States, be able to give reasons for the type of land use during different historical periods, develop maps using a computer graphic design program which show the distribution of natural resources in the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and give examples of how people exploited these resources as the country became more industrialized and people moved westward.

Materials

For the teacher: wall map of the United States

For each student: copy of Black Line Master (BLM) *Bestsellers*; pencil; sheet of standard, plain white paper; markers or colored pencils

For each group of students: three sheets of poster board or butcher paper, computers, computer graphic design program

For the class: access to information resources on early United States history

Activity

A. Colonial Land Use

1. Pull down the wall map of the United States. Have a student volunteer point out the area where the original 13 British colonies were located.
2. Explain that when European settlers arrived in America, rich farmland was yet to be cultivated, clear water was abundant, huge forests had yet to be timbered, and large herds of animals roamed the land.
3. Describe how the different colonies began to use the land, using examples such as fishing and shipbuilding in New England and large plantation farming in the South.

B. Westward Expansion, Industrialization, and Urbanization

1. Explain to students that as the United States expanded westward, more land and resources became available.
2. Tell students that during westward expansion, many factories were built; natural resources such as iron ore, oil, and coal became increasingly important; and roads, railroads, and canals were built to improve communication and trade.
3. Describe how the population of the United States has continued to grow, resulting in increased urbanization and consumption of resources.

Technology Literacy Standards

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
1	X	X	X	X		X	X
2	X	X	X			X	X
3	X		X			X	X
4		X				X	
5						X	
6		X		X		X	
7						X	
8						X	
9						X	
10							
11				X		X	
12						X	
13				X			
14							
15				X			
16							

☒ = This Technology Literacy Standard is addressed in this lesson.

☐ = This Technology Literacy Standard is not addressed in this lesson.

C. Mapping Land Resource Use

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four students.
2. Give each group three sheets of poster board or butcher paper and colored pencils or markers.
3. Tell groups they will research the distribution of natural resources and land use during the early history of the U.S., and that they will use their research to design maps.
4. Instruct each group to construct three maps of the United States: one map from 1800, one from 1900, and one from 2000. Explain that each map will depict the distribution of resources and land usage and that maps should include agricultural areas, urban and metropolitan areas, forested regions, and locations of natural resources.
5. Instruct students to include the following elements on their maps: title, labels, and an explanatory legend or key.
6. Instruct students that they will be creating the maps on the computer using a computer graphic design program.


D. Book Sale Flies


1. After students have finished their maps, give each student a copy of the BLM *Bestsellers*, a sheet of plain white paper, and a pencil.
2. Make information resources available to students.
3. Have students share their completed fliers and maps with the rest of the class.

Questions for Review


Basic Concepts and Processes

While discussing parts A and B, ask questions such as:


 How has a wealth of natural resources helped make the United States a powerful nation?


 What do you think it was like for European immigrants in the nineteenth century to arrive in a land with so many resources?

After students complete their maps for part C, ask questions such as:

 What regions of the U.S. have changed the least in terms of land usage? Which have changed the most?

 Give possible reasons for these changes.


 Who has benefited the most from the resources of the United States? Who has benefited the least?

 How do you think land and resource usage will change in the United States during the next hundred years?

Name: _____

Bestsellers

Directions: Imagine that you are an author who needs to promote the sale of a book you are going to write. The book will describe an issue relating to land and resource usage in the United States. Pick a topic that interests you, research it, and design a sales flier that promotes a book you would write about the subject. The flier should give the title of the book and a brief summary of the book's topic, and it should make the book sound interesting. Add artwork to your flier to make it more interesting if you wish. A sample flier is shown below.



Read **Vanishing Buffalo!**

This exciting book describes how white settlers killed thousands of buffaloes as they settled the prairie. The book details the trade in buffalo hides and explains why some people killed the buffalo even when they didn't keep the hides. Firsthand accounts from travelers and buffalo hunters describe the methods used to take down these giant beasts, as well as how herds of buffaloes, miles wide and miles long, were reduced to a few small groups by the 1880s. This book also reveals the darker side of the buffalo hunt: the killing and waste of buffalo herds in order to starve and torment American Indian groups. See how the deliberate elimination of large buffalo herds by white men caused the death of many Indians and forced Indians onto reservations. Learn how the decline of the buffalo herds changed the ecology of the prairie.

It's all here for you to read in the thrilling adventure:

Vanishing Buffalo!

Bestsellers

Teacher Directions

After students have finished their maps, give each student a copy of the BLM *Bestsellers*, a sheet of plain white drawing paper, and a pencil. Make information resources available to students. Have students share their completed fliers with the rest of the class.

Answer Key

Not applicable.